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Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all stremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

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to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatiego*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*umwanga*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Umwanga* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet become a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

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them if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his father's neighbours (*pamafwene abapalemeni ba pene*). Then they discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obligations to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kinsmen working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives, attended.

The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example, Mwangubola's son had committed adultery with his father's wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast, where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case, 'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made friends with his father.'

Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior relative. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitration, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are discussed in ensuing chapters.

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most of fellow villagers (*lukumaipa*) or their angry murmuring (*lukwihumuya*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*umbepo nya bandu*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons exerted by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mwakile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman with wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 216–8).

The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*shipemo*)[1] and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the least it is essential that the men of the village should admit their responsibility for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Document, p. 246).

We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

[1] *Shipemo* is not used in the Kisiwa dialect, but is commonly enough in Selya, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

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for his own son whom he begot saying: "He is my own flesh and blood", then the men of the village will pass judgement.'

This 'breath' is thought also to fall on a chief who is harsh towards his people, or who acts unconstitutionally, as in refusing to make a 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when his village headmen advise him; and it falls on a village headman who treats a junior in office unfairly, or is overbearing to his men. Both pagan and Christian informants insisted that fear of 'the breath of men' was a powerful sanction in the traditional system against arbitrary rule. Amgene, a Christian deacon, himself raised the subject one day and said: 'Headmen and chiefs—pagans—would be hard on their people and seize their goods if they (the headmen and chiefs) did not fear witchcraft. Witchcraft is like God to them.'

At every point the solidarity of the village is emphasized; the neighbours themselves are held to be insulted by the bad behaviour of a son—'their son'—to one of their fellows, or by a woman 'soiling their son', or by an heir failing to recognize their concern in the inheritance of a deceased fellow. For example, Mwakanyanule had begotten no child for ten years, and this was attributed to the fact that, after quarrelling with his elder brother and refusing to attend his funeral, he had not admitted his fault to the men of the village when he came back and killed a cow. His impotence was attributed to their curse.

As we have seen, recovery is thought to depend (i) upon the wrong-doer reforming and providing the men of the village, which is angry, with a bull or bear for a feast, acknowledging guilt as he does so; and (ii) upon the men of the village admiring their anger and responsibility for his illness, and expressing good will. 'If a daughter-in-law should have looked on her father-in-law by mistake she makes beer and sends it to her father-in-law. He calls his friends and admits: "Indeed I was angry with her for she looked at me", and the others say: "Yes, indeed, let her child get fat".' (*vide* pp. 133-6).

It may well be asked, is there any objective reality at the root of this belief in 'the breath of men'? Does the wrong-doer, fearing his neighbours, really become paralyzed or impotent? It is possible that a sinner may sometimes develop these symptoms as the result of fear. We do not know, what is certain is that impotence, sterility, lingering illnesses including paralysis, and sickly

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754 627 replied the other, "that is why I have followed him, for your house is my home! If you love M. you too will be expelled!" And the others said: "Had you known about the case, we should have expelled you both!" "Let us tell him then", said Mwambuputa. But M. was not in the house and had to be fetched. When he came Mwambuputa said: "Your neighbours have followed you saying that they have expelled you. You have done some evil, have you not? I, when I received you, did not know of this, I thought you were just moving." "What is their reason for driving me away?" asked M. "That I've not yet asked them, we will ask them together." Then one man said: "You M., when you moved, why did you move?" M.: "The reason was this, our child (*sic*) at home was sick and we met to express our anger; after this I said to a friend, 'Why do they express their anger and say some one of us has eaten the child for there is a great deal of fever about and many children are sick?' This I said, and then found my friends said I was the witch. 'We expel you' they said, so I moved." "Yes," they said, "you knew yourself to be a witch, why else did you not show indignation and surprise and take your friends to Mwambuputa to be tried? Now you've given them power, and they have followed you here!" Another said: "If your friends drive you from the village will you be obstinate?" Then Mwambuputa said: "No more words, leave the village, your fellows tell you to go!"

754 783 M. condemned himself in the eyes of his neighbours by suggesting that their hinted accusation was false, after they had gathered to express indignation; and here we come to one of the essential points in the Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft. A witch may repent; if he does repent he is no longer a danger to the village, but an asset, since as a witch he has the power to defend the village as well as to attack; and *admission of guilt is taken as a sign of repentance*. The Nyakyusa hold that a witch is always conscious of his evil activity and they have no ritual expressions of good will such as the Zande blowing on chicken wings, but they stress the obligation of a suspect to admit guilt, either directly or by implication. It is said that in the past, if a suspect admitted guilt, he was not driven out. Very few people, however, do admit guilt; the only case we traced was that of a labourer on the Lupa gold-fields who was accused by his fellows of harming the eyes of one of the gang, who had just discovered a large

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nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined.

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwaikambo: 'A certain man, Kololo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses [who was a pagan, despite his name] moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Korosso.'

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neighbour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*Uligona*), or 'What are you?' (*Uligwaki*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case so reported to us: 'Mwantibe once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwantibe got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwantibe hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.'

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo ex-

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objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutaq' ikikenge*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

5. *The age-village and the ancestors*

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chiefdomship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

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A man who has been driven out and then fetched back provides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 171–4.

If a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally incompatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft, recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be overcome by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witchcraft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunde: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

When our informants discussed moving and returning to the home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows (*abantu*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–1.

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(b) 'The Breath of Men.'

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—cont.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged Aim	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
1	Village headman (Mwaambagwike)	(a) 3 children died (b) Further deaths among his children after he married	Grudging neighbours outside kraal Failed to perform fourth ritual of children before leaving		Fled to Lake-shore plain (Mu Ngonde) Returned home. Killed bull. Abandoned land as not performing ritual
2	Widow	Widow ailing	Ritual not performed for her as suburb-leaver	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Very ailed herself. Frowned neighbours and relatives. Tired of illness. Finally admitted their anger.[1] Said the ritual was finished. She continued ill.
3	Widow	Widow ill	Man of chief's family had not killed bull as she as subordinate ritual	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	She called neighbours and relatives. Killed. Neighbours admitted their anger
4	Child	Child ill	Father failed to send a gift of food and beer, when she was taken back to her husband, and she is the daughter of a chief's sister	'The breath' comes from her husband's friends. 'They are angry because of the ground-nuts food'	Rites performed. The girl died shortly afterwards and her death was attributed to sorcery
5	Child	Child ill	Refused to hold 'cooling rite' of men	'The country was angry'	Killed 1 cows for people to feast
6	Married woman	Many ex-cows children	Run off with lover three times. Finally husband forced lover to run him	His father's village 'shunned' because she had killed a man as court. 'Breath' of village affairs because she came more frequently to see a grandparent. Wrong diagnosis of the doctor to whom she went for medicine that she might bear children	Rites continued
7	Man (a doctor)	Deputies on child for 10 years	Did not come to have elder brother with whom he had quarrelled	'The men (of his elder brother's village) were angry. Illness due to the cattle (disease) of men'	Killed 1 cow in elder brother's village (as 1st rite left the men of the village about it properly (i.e. admit his guilt)
8	Man (A)	Man (B) for 2 years (until wealthy, was cattle and is active)	Lawsuit—cross borne of father's sister	All men were astonished and amazed. A	A killed 4 cows at father's place. Relatives and neighbours ate other animals at feast. A recovered (until B. (A had also been treated by a doctor-hospital.)

[1] (Reading = to complain. The implication is that they expressed, and so got rid of, their anger (cf. pp. 89-102).

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No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
9	Senior Village Headman	Paralysed	His encouraged child to expel junior headman from country when latter refused to love road	'Illness of senior headman due to the breath of his junior colleagues. He was cursed because he was regarded as in the favourite of the chief.' Diagnosis by divination	Bull and beer provided by junior headman. Ate and drank with senior headman and made friends
10	Woman	Unable to walk	Told by villagers (compliers) to choose heir of her brother. Refused to do so, asking them to choose	'They (villagers) cursed her'	Nothing yet done. Thought that villagers will deny responsibility, saying 'it is not our illness' if offered a cure
11	Woman	Her baby ill	Insulted husband's mother	Illness diagnosed as 'impure,' a disease due to 'the breath of man'. No divination, 'knew themselves'	Woman and child given medicines by a doctor. Woman's father brought a cow for the mother-in-law she insulted.
12	Headman of young men	Ill a long time and still ill	He and his young men built in the village of their fathers before fathers had moved	Illness due to 'the breath of men' (the fathers) because he seized another's office as headman by building in his village. Diagnosis by divination	Nil. Should have asked old men to leave him
13	Girl (one)	Ill a year. Died the sixth year	Did not drink father's (second) beer in father's village. 'Others ate the food'	Village angry. Their breath fell on him when he came to fetch away property. Diagnosis by divination	After a year's illness, killed a bull. Ate with friends and relatives in father's village
14	Man	Died	Killed large bull for his children (sacrifice to ancestors) and gave only one leg to neighbours	'Perhaps (he died) because he grudged his fellow villagers meat. Neighbours are shocked if a man kills and does not call them to feast'	
15	Woman	She child ill	Person of her husband	Illness diagnosed as *ngwiro* (as illness due to 'the breath of man'). Diagnosis by divination	Admission of sin. Woman and other gave her relics to lower here. Her husband called his fellows to drink and speak their anger and speak about the child's recovery (cf. p. 226)
16	Younger brother of chief	Died	Claimed to be a chief	People said 'breath of man'. Family said witchcraft. Diagnosis by divination	

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(b) 'The Breath of Men.' contd. MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
17	Village headman	Hurt his hand on a stone directly he reached the Lapo to work	Had left for work without the agreement of his people	'Country was angry because he was a headman' (and had gone to work)	None. Died shortly afterwards. Death attributed to witchcraft of fellow headman (cf. cases of witchcraft Nos. 22)
18	Young child Wrongly heir of his deceased mother brother and so liable to child-sacrifice	Did not beget a son by his betrothed wives	Not specified	Village headmen angry as sacrifice child has taken not effective. The headmen showed their anger by not taking child to doctor as they should have done. He went alone	None when case recorded
19	Kaulido, hereditary priest (of chief's lineage)	Kaulido ill	Did not cook for his village neighbours. 'They complained because I, a great chief, did not cook food for them'	Fell ill night after attending a beer drink at a neighbour's house	Treated neighbours. Treated by a doctor
20	Kaulido	Kaulido had wounds	Provided I got at least the fellow priests when he should have provided 6 pots or a calf	Sickness due to wrath of men. Diagnosis of a doctor	
21	Kaulido	Kaulido ill	Cut down a sacred tree which he should not have cut	'The whole country is angry'. 'Priests and village headmen are angry'	Treated other priests on coast and beer
22	Village headman, Bebele	His sow drowned	Ordered to pay a fine for disorder at moon, and refused. Complained to the District Officer	'All the village headmen are angry'	Sows rescued. Later brought home (cf. pp. 208-9)
23	Man (junior brother of chief)	Died	He had cut one branch for an axe-handle from a self-sown tree growing in the cultivated land of a village in which he was a new comer. He had not asked the villagers' permission to cut wood as he should have done	'The "owners" of the village were angry and killed him'	None recorded

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23. RITUAL OF RECONCILIATION

Mwakionde (doctor, brother of a chief).

789 626 783 'If my son has sworn at me, my friends in the village are angry and say: "Why has our child sworn at his father?" Then the youth falls ill, and people say: "It is the curse (*ikigune*). It was we who were angry, because he swore at our fellow." Then he seeks something with which to pay—perhaps a bull or cow. If I, the father, am a rich man I brew beer for the people coming to instruct my child and to say: "It was we who were angry, young man, because you swore at your father. Now may you recover!" While they are drinking the beer they kill the bull, which he found, and eat it.'

Mwambelike (pagan man).

'A junior relative who has wronged a senior and later wishes to make friends has to satisfy not only him but his neighbours. For example: A man X seduced a widow of his father who was regarded as the property of his senior half-brother, Y, the heir. (She was not Y's wife, because she was sister of his mother, but given to deceased's younger half-brother.) Later X paid Y one cow as a fine "for seducing his mother". Then X brought him a bull to re-enter the family and make friends, saying: "Indeed, I wronged you, my father." Y said: "If you wish to make friends again you must also bring a cow for the village to eat, so that all shall know that I am satisfied." X brought a heifer calf which was eaten by the village.'

There was no mention of sickness in this case.

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38. BRINGING HOME A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Mwambuputa's home-coming

Mwambuputa is the senior headman of Mwankuga who had fled to the Lake-shore plain from fear of 'the breath' of his men (cf. pp. 229–30). He was brought back with ceremony. His return also brought to a head an old land dispute (cf. pp. 188–90). For the status of the personalities concerned consult the table of villages and headmen on pp. 181–5.

Record of G. W., 1/5/35.

'I visited Tandale (Mwainyobolela) the village headman of Busikali and the man chosen to bury chiefs. Katolile (the village headman by inheritance of Bujenga, and a brother of Jane, Kasitile's wife) turned up with two others to fetch him to the home-coming of Mwambuputa (Mwafungo)[1] in Igembe. We picked up Kikalango (a junior son of the chief Mwaipopo) on the way and he and Tandale told me the following story:

"Mwambuputa went to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde). Then Mwankuga I (the young chief), while he was still alive, found a cow and the village headmen went off with it to fetch Mwambuputa home. Mwankuga did not go himself. This cow was kept by Mwambuputa, not eaten. It was to say to him; 'Come back, my headman.' Then Mwambuputa agreed and said: 'I will return, take my son back with you now.' So they came back. Then Mwankuga I died, and Mwambuputa came up to his funeral and put up temporary huts to live in, and he has not since been back to MuNgonde. Yes, he could have built proper houses before this ceremony, had he wished, it is not forbidden."

"Those who come to this gathering are his fathers (i.e. the men of Mwaipopo) and his friends (i.e. the men of Mwankuga), all commoners—no chiefs come to this ceremony. And in fact neither Mwaipopo nor Mwankuga II was there, nor did I see any of Mwaipopo's brothers. Kikalango and Kititu (junior sons of Mwaipopo) came to accompany me. We arrived at Mwambuputa's huts with Ngulyo, about noon. About 100 men were present. I noticed Mwambuputa himself, Kakuju, Ngulyo, Tandale, Katotile, and Mwasebe (Kabelile).

[1] Some informants used the name 'Mwambuputa', others 'Mwafungo'. To avoid confusion we use only the former.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
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'I was told: "The meaning of the ceremony is this: Mwambuputa says to us: 'My fathers, you sent for me, I have come'; and then they show him a place to build, saying: 'You, friend, this is your homestead here.'" At noon Kakuju explained: "Now Mwanaambe the senior headman of Mwaipopo (actually he has inherited this position and lives in another chiefdom, coming here for cases and ceremonies) has gone to announce to Mwaipopo that: 'Your child has returned'. Mwaipopo will send him back saying to him: 'Thank you for telling me, my headman, do you go and perform the ceremony and ritual (*ukatendekeye, ukanyagule*) he is your child, you are his father.' Then he will return here and say: 'I have told Mwaipopo, let us go and show Mwambuputa his new homestead.' These huts of Mwambuputa's are on the old men's side, it is Bujege here. He will be given a homestead in Igembe. He had no place in Igembe, he was a stranger. So after the funeral of Mwankuga I, he went to the old men and was given a homestead, and bananas to eat here. A man named Mwanbenja had them before, but he moved to Mwangomo's country. Now they will go and give him a homestead in Igembe. He did build before in Igembe, but he spent a long time on the plain, and others have built there." (For another version cf. pp. 188–90.)

'Then Kakuju asked Kikalango: "Have they told Mwankuga?" Kikalango replied: "I do not know." Kakuju explained to me: "They should tell him, 'Your man has returned'." Mwanaambe (Mwegama) came back and called the old village headmen together for a discussion. Then he led us off to Igembe, to the homestead of Mbuluko Mwaipopo a cross-cousin (*antasi*) of the chief. Just before we got there Mwanaambe turned to Tandale and the other senior men and said: "Look after Mwambuputa in the war by night, look after him in dreams."

'Kititu and Kikalango explained that "Mbuluko is Mwakalungu and Mwaipopo;[1] now they have come here he will have to move and give place to Mwambuputa. At first he refused, but they pacified him. He cannot refuse, he will move. They just considered where it would be best for the village headman to be." And, previously, on the way, they had told me that to whatever house we came, the householder would have to move and give place.

'Two bulls, one full-grown, and one a little smaller, had been promised by Mwambuputa, and were brought with us. Mwanjinga, son of Mwanaambe killed them both. Mwanaambe said to the village headmen: "We give Mwambuputa to you, Mwakwese, and you (here he mentioned other village headmen whose names are not in my notes). He was in exile (*udise*), he has returned." A woman, wife of the house-

[1] The implication is that Mbuluko inherited through his mother from his grandfather, Mwaipopo I, but we did not pursue this.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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holder, brought out a dish of cooked beans and set them down. The two men nearest took and shared them. The division of meat was carried out by Mwansambe in collaboration with his senior colleagues. It was as follows:

1 ribs and saddle (*akakwa*) to Mwaipopo (chief)
1 ribs and saddle to Mwankuga (young chief)
1 hump to Mwaipopo
1 hump and liver to me (sent with me when I went home).

'It was explained that "If it had been an ordinary killing we would have sent both ribs and saddle to Mwaipopo, one for Kalinga, and one for Kalobo (the two chief wives), now we send one to Mwankuga because it is his ceremony."

1 leg to the men of Bujege
1 leg to the men of Bujenga
1 leg to the men of Nkyemo
1 leg to the men of Ndupando
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwaipopo

1 leg to the men of Igembe
1 leg to the men of Ipoma
2 legs to the men of Njesi and their juniors the men of Mponga
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwankuga

'Mwakatika of Mponga, the headman of the village immediately junior to Njesi had not come, so Kakuju of Njesi divided two legs, one for his own village Njesi, and one for Mponga.

'I went home with Kititu and Kikalango and two children sent to carry my meat. On the way Kititu said: "The leg of Igembe will be divided up at Mwambapuna's palace (i.e. where it was killed) into four parts. The four villages of Igembe will each get their share: each of these four groups will have a pot, but the meat will be no further divided.

Igembe, 1 pot
Lugombo, 1 pot
Katumba, 1 pot
Nkilonde, 1 pot ("They eat with the men of Igembe".)"

'(This was confirmed the following day by a young man of Katumba who had eaten some of the meat.)

'Kabolile Mwaseba of Ipoma came with his younger men also. Mwalisu Mwaijonga is his assistant headman and he was there, but Kabolile cooked all the meat together, in one pot. It was explained that "While in Igembe we have many villages it is not so in Ipoma.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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There is Ndongoti, true, but they always eat with their elders. The men of Igembe are the oldest of all, they are inheriting from the men of Bujege as they die. They are senior to the men of Ipoma who are their juniors. The men of Ipoma did go through the 'coming out', but with their elders. Mwalieu has no separate village."

'About the ceremony I was told "Mwambuputa took the initiative, he sent a message to Mansambe saying: 'I have returned' and Mansambe told the others." And someone else explained that, "Before Mwambuputa killed the bulls we did not see that he had come back; now he has returned."'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 765 766 776 *isalya*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet banana flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilitsi* is a large variety of plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *isjali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *isjali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bear her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

[242]

765 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicine, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

763 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the 765 doorways of the mourning hut, the doctor pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

765 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*inyungu*) and one or more lentils (*inandale*).[1] She half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and creeps and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ukulanda* (the litter of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add cowpeas (*inkunga*), others oil-seeds (*ngwesha*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ha Ngonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant raises the *alalala*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubuita bwitile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gaping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to her own father's homestead with the filth (*indefu*) of intercourse on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is performed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the house of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingwale*) and diarrhoea. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingwale*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son,

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *alalala* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe.

(*akanya akufumbe*). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' which, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased to the land of the shades. 764 [356]

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they build a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, if there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in this hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafyo*); a fire is lighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the *umyangati* tree into a pendent on the fire, saying as he does so: 'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with medicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment. Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each participant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a bark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a bunch of *ikinjala* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves him she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was dead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then the participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves round his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a plantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it comes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or her) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they come to the stream each participant sits down in it and the officiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of his elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head. These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow away in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying flowers, *kalengalenga* and *kalungula*, which they throw on to the roof, and the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calabash on to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in turn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out through the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the ground before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils (and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Selya ritual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted chicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain trees they stole and from a sweet banana tree provided by the family, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat they look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the officiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds 764 764 [71]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
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Culture

QUESTION: Where is the one who has just died? 764-
MWAKISAMBO: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: 'You 775
shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future.' When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

QUESTION: And the trampling dance (*shakanya ingoye*)?

MWAKISAMBO: We say: 'You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body.' We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

QUESTION: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

MWAKISAMBO: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

QUESTION: The two leaves and leaving and saying: '*Syoko, syoko of father, syoko, syoko of mother*'?

MWAKISAMBO: Syoko is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*tate*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*mamla*). Before that is [illegible] ●
dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

QUESTION: Why the water on the roof? 764
MWAKISAMBO: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs 775
off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of fences, he smears faeces on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

QUESTION: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things? 764
MWAKISAMBO: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and 775
do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has covered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

QUESTION: But even if you do wash him steadily, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

MWAKISAMBO: Because this shadow (*ipangulo*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

2: Wilson E-5-(1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Gulu, Kulingulu

763 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*anyage*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her enthronion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwaihoja, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukunshanda*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 13). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakemanene*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six cents of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingania*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litukuke, litukuke,
Tukuke mwalingula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akenyanga kandagila
Pulili po pakuko bwanga.
The *cenga* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*akemi*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyelwee (a senior wife of Mwaihoja who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyelwee's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that sixth wives washed with nine wives, seventeenth wives with ten wives. Others insisted that ceremonies also washed with two.

[2] i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Soiga, Mangoude

347 334 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

383 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual ilikalega. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the ilikalega. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with ukipiki medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

334 After eating the ilikalega her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhoea. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

406 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the

[1] Kaberry mentioned that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are thin sucked dry.' Mwakisambo denied any danger to mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selfn, McNgonde

602 585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 833 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingesia*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [842] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children." '

● 783 881 585 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakweleleja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alombwike ulunaga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself [768] with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalilenje said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ulunaga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungwe

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandiliko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipiki* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated the grove dies. She will be like a stream [*i.e.* her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kasitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandment with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukukilenya*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandiliko and Kasitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandiliko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angumbwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngapele umoto*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been dishonored, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps she wore for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.
>
> The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'
>
> The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandiliko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.
>
> The cloth put on the bride like a veil after she has washed

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Golya, Mukyusa

§31 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
§85 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.)
Angombwike explained further:

Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ilinga*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'

Question: *Ejetale*?

Answer: *Ejetale* is very old. It's to blow her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

§39 *Ejetale*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batase*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

§31 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileke
§38 said:
• §73 We give the bride bead body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*mano*), she was dirty during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ubulibi*).

§81 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with fevers,
§85 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Niyee*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileke, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*inga ilinda*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukukwesia*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Niyee, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakisambo denied this, see infra, p. 109.
[2] Ukuiyee: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'317 Ngonde F'317
Nyakyusa
Colyn, Fis Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians whom we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakitolo confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle-caster hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibala* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she carries hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be free. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overstays her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstayed the child' or 'The child has overstayed the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1957 FNIT Ngonde FNIT
Nyakyusa
Selga Mukyusa

evening our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.

Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kwefa*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she sulks her mother. Her mother develops diarrhoea. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kukunaya ubupali*). . . . The mother's diarrhoea is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she sulks the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhoea, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhoea, the filth of my wife.

Question: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?

Kasitile: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhoea and may not become weak.

The explanation given of the Kukwe *dibala* rite makes clear that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour, Mwakibelela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

She daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said, 'It's the girl.'

Question: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

Mwakibelela: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treatments with sedentia and right medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy cow'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ointment, shaves the mush of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Perekano's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the people of her home village (*ukupwa*), her father making the first gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right forelimb (*jumapa*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyanile, Kyanile, Kyanipwa

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukwisoka*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibala*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning ?: has the fifth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhoea. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwasilemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's outhouse (kujisila) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's hut. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with coitus interruptus. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict.

(3) The exact purpose and symbolism

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Fwakuzi's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?017 Ngonde F?017
Nyakyusa
Kukuc

Mwasanzwa: The bride does not come water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally "come out from"] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ubupyajala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *abamwabulile* and giving gifts to the *abapwo* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and losing water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: "The rite means that the dirt is finished," said Pwakeni's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: "Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body." "

Question: In the puberty ritual?

Mwasanzwa: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we threw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wear the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

Question: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

Mwasanzwa: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished wearing our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: "Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual." But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
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they both work in us, they are not only in our partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and place it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother once will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I dishonour her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mother' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the chaste are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ngonde* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibale* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
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blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhoea because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhoea is to go bad, to expel (ahunya) the filth. The *ilibala* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwandembo explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN
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Question: The spirits are angry?

Mwakitete: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

Kakuse, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband whose his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another man entering her.

If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhoea; in the old days we fell in war.

Question: What if the adulterer practises coitus interruptus?

Kakuse: Yes, if the man is clever he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are killed by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised coitus interruptus, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhoea, I do not suffer from it.

The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa, is that of a man with his father's wife. Angumbwike explained:

If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told, a slave is sold, a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and smeared down. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cow meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw one of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a waterfall and smeared him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's wife the husband may have diarrhoea perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jones, the son of Kinokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jones lived) Jones seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandisi said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

Quarrico: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

Mwandisi: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (*bwasi*) and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: 'Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhoea.' And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: 'Is she your relative?' And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in childbirth:

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows red' . . . . The picture is surely one of a woman's physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

The second general conception underlying the taboos of precaution is that of *ubutoto*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the python of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*mito*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*bunse*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhoea and give them weight. Diarrhoea and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

The great specific against 'emptiness' is *dipele* medicine, used in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 39.

2: Wilson K-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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845 If a woman has difficulty in labour we officiants tell her: 'Speak!
•737 With whom did you commit adultery?' and the child comes down. When she has spoken it is born. We do not give her medicine. We give her earth.

848 QUESTION: What if an illegitimate boy dies, do you perform the ritual with *ilipiki*?

LOMMASO: No, because he was a child of the long grass [i.e. illegitimate], we only treat the mother. We do not perform the ritual with the *ilipiki* of the husband. If it is a girl, and she to whom we gave earth grows up, the father [i.e. her mother's husband or, if the mother was unmarried, her father] says: 'Let the husband perform the ritual, because the cattle are mine, she is my child, and that is the custom.' If they give a child of the long grass the medicine it will die, because it is not its medicine. . . . I know about it because I give children the medicine.

There is no question about the legal rights over an illegitimate child, and Nyoni and the other men held that ritual and legal control went together. Lyandileko and Kasitile, both specialists in this field, held that traditionally, at least, the *ilipiki* could only be used for a legitimate child: to do otherwise was dangerous.

So important is this acknowledgement of legitimacy that in many Christian families, where other traditional rituals are ignored, the husband's mother still brings *ilipiki* for his child.

851 As soon as the child is born a fowl—a cock for a boy, a hen for a girl—is sent to the young wife's parents, to notify them of the birth. Then her 'mothers' come 'to keep her company' (*ukwesepeja*) during her confinement, and at the end of it they take her home with them for a visit of a month or more. They bring her back to her husband, formally, with gifts of beer, food, and mats (*ukwendeka*), just as they did after the puberty ritual. We met one party, taking back a young mother to her husband, in which there were twenty-one women carrying baskets with food or pots of beer. The grandmother was happy and excited and, dancing up to greet us, she said, breathlessly: 'That's the owner of this beer [pointing to her daughter], all these pots!' The feast was unusually lavish on this occasion. Two pots of beer, two sacks of bananas, a vessel of milk, and a mat, were taken by the daughter of Chief Mwaigoga when she returned to her husband after the birth of her first child, and that seems to be the ordinary standard. The husband kills a bull calf for meat for his guests, or gives them a shilling or two.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1937 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
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All the women present, and Mwaipopo himself, had shaved today.

We stayed forty minutes there and some of the food was eaten on the spot. The rest of the food, the pot of beer, and the ointment and rouge, we carried back with us to Mwakibelo's. The beer was given to Mwakibelo who drank it with eleven other men, his kinsmen and neighbours. The food and ointment and rouge went to the women.

28 July 1935

The women had intended to go and visit the maternal relations (*abipaw*) of the mother of twins yesterday, but her 'father' (Mwaipopo) had sent a message to say: 'Do not come yet, they are all away, some in Mwandenia's country, others planting potatoes.' Mwakibelo, asked about his own mother's relations, replied: 'My own *abipaw* have all died, and even if they had not, it would be too far to go, for they lived in Kukwe country. I did not throw medicine into the grass for them, so, we never do.

'The doctor is coming soon to sprinkle the cattle, all our herd here, my cattle and my neighbours', with medicine.' There are two herd groups in the village.

28 July 1935 (Sunday)

c. *Treating the cattle*

We were called to Mwakibelo's place. He told us:

> The doctor brought medicine last night, just before dark, and she said to me: 'Sprinkle the cattle yourself.' 'Perhaps it is taboo for me to do so?' I replied. 'No, not at all, you sprinkle them; I am going off to church tomorrow, to the catechumen's class.' Her elder sister is baptized already and she herself intends to be baptized. So I asked her: 'To whom shall we go for medicine then?' She replied: 'I am giving the medicine to my daughter, the wife of Mwakisisile, the son of Mwaliyo.'

When we arrived at about 1.15 p.m. Mwakibelo's cattle and some others were standing round a smoky fire, as usual, during the midday hours.[1] The pot of medicine was steaming on another fire at a little distance. 'How do the cattle fall sick, if you do not treat them?' we asked. 'They purge continually. . . .'

Mwakibelo's wife said: 'We should send to Mwangonu and let his cattle be treated too.' Mwakibelo (to us): 'Mwangonu herds his cattle with Mwakibelo, in a separate herd from ours,[2] she says they should come too; certainly when Mwangonu had twins our

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 32. [2] *op. cit.*, p. 36.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

§95 cattle were up to be counted.' (To his wife): 'All right, they shall
●723 come,' and he sent off a boy with a message.

Mwangonu came to inquire about the message sent to him and then went back to fetch his and Mwakikeni's cattle. Six banana suckers were prepared. The cattle present were splashed by Mwakalebela and two of his wives, each holding two banana tails. They were the cattle of Mwakalebela himself and those of seven neighbours who lived with him. Then the other herd of the village came in (the cattle of five men) and were splashed. Mwakalebe II and Mwakikeke (neighbours) both came up at the end and had their legs splashed with the remains of the medicine. They had both been splashed before—we had seen Mwakikeke being splashed—so we asked: 'Why again?'

Mwakalebe II replied: 'We were a great crowd the first time, and I did not get properly splashed.' Mwakikeke: 'I feel a pain.'

13 February 1935

§96 Mwakalebela and his wife told us that she had been to her mother's people (*ubupaa*) after we left Isoma, but that he did not go to his *ubupaa* and will not do so.

vi. *The Ritualist*

We only saw the twin ritual enacted right through once, but the different events mentioned here were repeatedly described to us, and the ritual for Mwakalebela's twins may be taken as typical. Two essential actions are, however, omitted from this account, viz. the eating of messages of porridge from the ground and the ritual intercourse.[1] We describe them in the words of Mwakisenge of the plain, a middle-aged Christian, himself the youngest brother of twins, who gave a very detailed account of the whole ritual. He said that at the 'bringing out' rite, besides being smeared with medicine and splashed, children are given medicated porridge.

The women cook porridge for the children, medicated porridge, not-eaten on the ordeal. To this cooking and eating of porridge they only take children who are unmarried. The reason that they eat porridge is this: it is a ritual which they do so that when the parents of twins come out of their houses, we may not just greet them, but that they may be one with us, we whose bellies are heavy (*tunjitukumanyaga ifisu ngwee, fibeti ifyaa na mano tali bantu mumbi*). To eat the porridge they fashion little balls or messages, one for each child, smear them with ointment

[1] The rite was also described by a Ndali doctor who had just supervised it in a twin ritual.

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1938)1937 F'917 Ngonde F'917
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they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhoea. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way.

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?'

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty–marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and shunned like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a mediator, but the fear of mediators was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'.

[1] Presumably longer when the initiation and ritual lasted longer.

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

[745] An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

[746] (a) *Cleansing after spearing*

[682] When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, but they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ukulenga*, 'the disease of spearing'.[1] Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[747] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an autopsy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*amapwa*).[2] The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fall ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The murderer always commissions to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fall ill.

[748] The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a wrestler and make me

[1] *Ukulenga* = a spear. [2] *Ukulenga* = to fight together with spears.

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are washed with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicine are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*ekipan*) and their wives, but not their affines. 'Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

> We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, so, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicine for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder (as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took marriage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*ewete gwa lakwap*) together.

(f) *Eating the rope*

A man who has been bound with rope (*ngapit*), or has committed suicide by hanging,* or raided cattle and returned them, is also

* When the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Shewmaker, one of the few Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died, the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. S, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister.

believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a manner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the *ngozi* and is called *ngozi* after them.

Mwalambo explained:

If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ngozi', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kaitila's wife, Kilubi, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the *ngozi* of her father. They bound him at Tabeyo; he died in peril; it is those *ngozi* which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwetila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the *ngozi* used to collect cattle raided by his grandfather. Kaitila, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwetila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamunda, the father of Mukwetila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwetila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ngozi*—the disease of *ngozi*—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwantebale's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing cows for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief; and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the youngest son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ngozi*. . . .

The sickness of *ngozi* (*ngozi*) is of three sorts coming from: (a) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (b) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (c) the disobedient unmindfulness of men and their breath. So dreams they put the sickness of *ngozi* into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of *ngozi* come into his stomach.' The sickness of *ngozi* lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; as it

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
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grave on. Mwamwalile was never bewitched, but we say it was that sickness of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But the medicine for rotting the ropes (*mbuye*) is the same for all these diseases from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine. We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at the grave now is to rot him who has died that the sickness of ropes (*ngigi*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir loses to die, but we others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself. After the divination we drink another medicine, in beer, not the female beer. They brew another lot just for the medicine. 753 681 [787]

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to rot the ropes' at Mukwalile's funeral. He was buried at Kanicle's homestead and Kanicle was organising the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which projected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash, put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come. Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the relatives present. 783 764

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are praying (*nilipalizigani*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave, Kanicle, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the deceased:

> Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others. Have successes. Me? What can was there against me?

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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783 KAMTULE: You sons of Mwaka had a case against you . . . you fought.
764 HALF-BROTHER: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

KAMTULE: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
HALF-BROTHER: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
KAMTULE: That's what I say, let us pray well.
HALF-BROTHER: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hair.
SUITER: Let us confess [lit. vomit] we were angry.
HALF-BROTHER: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The cow made us angry.

783 Mwainumo described a treatment with *indaga* medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are coiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

764 (c) *Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic*
789 Sickness caused by sorcery or vengeance magic is believed to
783 spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her elder brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her elder brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two
[763] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ilyeja*[1] at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease
000 comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. went to confirm

[1] *Ilyeja* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a *senior* relative, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his *junior* relative to suffer in his own person or that of his children.

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However, when Mr. West is Comp.
the cause of both deaths with a famous diviner, Sambo, he was told that the boy's death was due to the anger of neighbours who had not been feasted as they should have been, but E's death was due to the sorcery of her first husband. M's report of the divinations is worth quoting: 787 791

I have just been to Sambo in the country of Swebi, he has divined and he tells me that the death of E. was due to the sorcery (ubulogi) of Mwakyusa, her first husband. He also told me the name of the doctor from whom Mwakyusa got the medicine to kill her, the man is K.; he is both a doctor and a smith in the country of K. He told me that Mwakyusa was angry because, when he tore her mouth, he paid to us a cow in damages; he said: 'I have paid the cow, I should have my wife. But they have taken her back and eaten my cow.' E. had left all her things in his house, her bark-cloths, her cloths, everything. Sambo tells me that Mwakyusa took all these things to K. and spoke four names, saying: 'I wish E. my wife, M., and one of M's wives [mother of the dead child] to die. If these die I shall be happy.' So the doctor prepared a medicine which he put into a calabash. He did this while saying the names, and he addressed the names to the cloths, as if one of them was E., one was me, and so on. If E. had left nothing behind he would have had to send a man up with medicine to our place.

He told me to go to Mwakisonde, who is a great doctor. Mwakisonde will come to my place and cook medicine, we shall all drink it, not only the three people named but all my distant relatives will collect to drink it, N., E's second husband will come too. About the child, Sambo denies that it is ifyepo, he says it is due to the wrong-doing of her father. At first my wife was married when very young, but her husband went away and left her, she never lived with him. So when she grew up she said: 'I am tired of being alone, I am going to get married.' So she came to me. I paid five cows to Mwandonia (the chief) who is the mother's brother of her father. Her own father is dead. She has a father by inheritance, but Mwandonia had looked after her a great deal, so I sent the cattle to him, and he sent them on to the elder brother of her first husband. But her father's heir said: 'That finishes the cows to be paid to her husband, but I want one for myself to make six.' Well, at first I was involved in a lawsuit and did not bring the cow, so her father was angry; he came and took her back home; then after a time I found the cow and took it to him, and he sent her back to me, but he did not, as the custom is, cook food for my friends of the village. He should have cooked some chickens and brewed some beer, so that my friends would be happy and say 'Thank you'. So now my friends are angry, they say: 'Why does he not bring his daughter back properly? Perhaps he is not her father!' The breath comes from my friends, they 783

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617 Nyakyusa

783 are angry because of food. If I had not given him the cow it would have been his anger, now it is that of my friends. At the other deaths the doctors diagnosed *ilopa*, but Sambo denies this. It is just the offence to my neighbours. He says I am to send the women to him, and he will put her right himself.

A month after E's death (April 25) Mwakiondo, the doctor, came to her elder brother's home to perform the ritual of protection. He and her second husband were next-door neighbours. The preparation and drinking of medicines was at her brother's homestead, but they moved to her husband's (where she was buried) to treat the grave. Beer had been prepared and the doctor added medicine to it. The mother of E., and one of her brother's wives, ground millet from their own crop, letting it fall on freshly-cut leaves of the sweet banana. This millet was used for the medicine. Meantime, one of the doctor's assistants opened the grave, digging down until he reached the cave in which the corpse had been placed. Then medicine to cause vomiting (*mdenye*), made with the lees of the beer, was poured in and eight pots of water. Mwakiondo explained that 'opening the grave is to rot the poison in the body' and the water is put in that it may reach the corpse—the amount depends on the depth of the grave. Then the grave was filled in again and three small lengths of root, anointed with red pigment, were stuck into the fresh earth. These, Mwakiondo said, were 'to close the way so that if the medicine comes again it will be turned back'. 'All three pieces of root are to close the way so that if that man comes again to work sorcery we shall escape, if Kyala keeps us.'

Then the doctor prepared a pot with about twenty roots, two varieties of spiny cactus, one impaled on the other, six packets of medicine, and water, and set it to boil on a fire made near the doorway of her brother's hut. The fire was lighted by friction by the male kinsmen, and the old fire was cleared out of the hut. A small bull was killed and its blood added to the brew. Porridge was made from this and the specially ground millet, and eaten by the participants. Then each of them, beginning with her elder brother, was scarified on the back, arms, legs, and feet and medicine from a horn rubbed in.

783 All through Mwakiondo spoke only of *protection*, but others,
784 speaking of the rite of filling the grave with water, explained it as a means of making the sorcery recoil on the sender, causing his death, and there is little doubt that this was one object of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pre- 783
sumed on the inclusion of the carrion crows and it is likely that they 784
were an ingredient intended to injure the senior of seniors.

(d) Prayer to the shades

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 771
relations, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 775
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 784
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am wounded and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is senile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tate*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given our cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*je wpela gwanga*)[1] for cattle are important (*mahala*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angumbwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelibeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batate*), and prayers are addressed 775
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 774
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[1] Literally, 'he is my grass one'.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1937 F'017 Ngonde F'017
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difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imisisi*, affliction from the shades. Ever going sour before it is mature is also *imisisi*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imisisi* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*akapindi*) and blowing it out (*akwipuisa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuswa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617 Nyakyusa

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukupuita* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confession both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

776 783 613 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support. 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *Ukwilomonya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *ukulomola* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 782 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ifyinja kyake ikilemo*). If an animal is sacrificed the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ijo nsupa* meat from the forelegs of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bibatila abakamwene*)'.

783 613 The proper person to approach the shades is (among commoners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

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[1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *isinqumo* which is sacred in a Pondo sacrifice. cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking the sacrificial beer.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1937 F'317 Ngonde F'317
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(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 4/3
knows the shades (*ajimepo imimbi*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock."' A wife also avoids honeycomb from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grove; she must stay silent and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwakisumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

Mwakisumo: Our *regular* custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *inimbi*, is to pray to the shades (*ukwipaula kukuwaha*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells 783
me: 'It is *inimbi*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*ukwijopa*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ulupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'Yes, Father, you so-and-so, you so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Stand by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have stinted a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
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787 The diviner does not divine by himself, but he who goes to inquire of him says: 'Perhaps it is so-and-so who is angry, perhaps it is so-and-so because I did not give him such and such a thing, perhaps it is so-and-so, I have heard a rumour that he is angry.' Then if he mentions someone whom the diviner has also heard say that he is angry because his brother has not given him something, the diviner assents, saying: 'Yes, it is that.'

● 783 MWAMUNGU (a middle-aged pagan): When I inherited from Mwakisisile, my elder brother, I was just about puberty, and my senior brother [i.e. half-brother], Mwakasole, took me to his place with all the wives, to bring me up. He was there in Mwangomo's country. I went to his home and two years running I hoed millet and it refused to grow. Then my sister said: 'Consult an oracle and see why it is.' So I went to the diviner who said: 'Your elder brother is angry because you left his grave, because you do not sweep his grave.' So I asked what to do and he told me to get millet and brew beer. So I brewed beer and left a little in a calabash overnight in the banana grove, and prayed with water. Also I left a cock. I killed[ed] the cock because I had no bull, and I left all the meat there also overnight. Then the next day the children, Angamilwike and others [Angamilwike was a son of the deceased] drank the beer and ate the cock. They ate all the cock, and took the first drink of the beer, and I finished it off. The diviner had told me to let the children begin first. Then next year the millet was very plentiful. I never did it again because I have never had trouble over food. If the crops had not grown I would have done it again.

§93 783 AMOS MUSA (a Christian teacher): When I was a boy my mother's brother once went to fish and caught two fish in his trap. He gave them to two of his wives, the third being absent. When she came back she was angry, saying: 'They have sinned me of food'. For a long time after that he found no fish in his traps. At last he consulted an oracle. The oracle attributed it to the third wife, because she had been angry. People said that she had been angry, and that the shades of her husband were angry too, and had stopped the fish entering the traps. So my mother's brother went to the wife and said: 'The oracle attributed it to you, were you angry?' She admitted it, saying: 'I was angry, but now I am satisfied. It's all right.' So then my mother's brother took his calabash cup and went in the evening to the banana grove and prayed with water. Next morning, before noon, when men always go to examine the fish traps, he found his traps full and overflowing with fish: they were leaping about inside. Indeed, it was very remarkable. I was there, for I grew up at my mother's brother's home.

Yes, the shades hear wives, though wives never pray to them; they listen to their anger.

The first catch after such a prayer is offered to the shades.

783 MWAMUNGU: The fish, when they have been cooked, remain overnight

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in the banana grove. No one sees any. Then in the morning the children go there and eat. Are they not the comrades of the shades? But for us grown people it is taboo. We eat later on. That is the old custom. And formerly no one dried the fish which first entered the trap. They cooked and ate them in the house with the children. . . . If they put them to dry in the sun the shades were angry, saying: 'Where are the fish we gave you? We do not see them in the house.'

LUNGO: Sometimes it is her father's anger which prevents a girl from becoming pregnant. Perhaps she runs off with men repeatedly, then her father is angry with her. He says: 'She is squandering my cattle.' He complains (*kudhemeya*) with his wives at the hearth and calls to mind his fathers, the shades. Then the girl does not conceive.

If later on the father forgives her, he sends a messenger to her husband, saying: 'Send me your wife, let her come and we will pray.' Then, after calling his fathers and killing a bull, he takes meat from the top of the frontal (*mugha*) and cuts it into pieces and puts a piece into the mouth of the girl, and she eats. They say that it is to drive the shades from the body of the girl, the shades who have caught hold of her fecundity. Some of the meat from the *mugha* is thrown down, and the children pick it up and eat it. It is taboo for others to take and eat it.

FIPASWE (a Christian elder): Perhaps your father has died and people have come to marry your sister; and perhaps the sister of your father (*nyadimuga*) claims one cow, saying: 'I am your father, give me one.' If you grudge it, then there is much murmuring which is heard by the shades, by your brother and your father who died. And so if your sister does not conceive people say: 'They grudged the father's sister, the shades are angry.' Then you seek a fowl and beer, and send them to your father's sister, and she puts the fowl under her bed that the shades may know it. She speaks, saying: 'Indeed I was angry.' The shades hear. That fowl opens the door; she knows that the cow is near, it is coming. She continues everything (*dhuoya gwa*) on receiving the fowl; this she speaks in her house. You go later with the cow to bring your sister to your father's sister. Then if the girl bears at her husband's everyone says: 'Indeed it was so.'

And if your sister has run off with a man and you are angry, the shades hear. You say: 'I do not know if she will conceive there.' Then she does not bear and people say: 'Let her take her husband to her brother.' If the husband is rich perhaps he seeks two cows and a bull calf, but the cows for bringing back are not sent first, a hen is sent first with a message, saying: 'I come on such and such a day.' The hen is put under the bed. The shades know about it. I, the brother, who was angry, pray, and she bears a child. But this does not happen among Christians; there is nothing of it.

764 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kaitile
678 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
● 787 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kaitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*idua*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(c) *Reconciliation*

628 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
783 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

678 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
783 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Married men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukunjapa*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukunjapa* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukupaata*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

678 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or*
775 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
783 murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 98–108.

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misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, where the shades are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the diviner; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following cases illustrate this:

Divorcement: It is the custom among the Nyakyusa to marry many wives, mature men and youngsters, so if a man has one of his home sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father and his body becomes like goat flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his property and returns to his home. He takes a friend with him and goes into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour sends three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their sons fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, asking that I forgive him and saying: "I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought", and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ukupa*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

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754 783 and the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
737 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
•783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *ululalo*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abanda* as opposed to *abakowa*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say [783] that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*dushusuye*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

754 644 783 KAMPELE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not mourn; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ijo nsupa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 783 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingolo*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

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cited a case she had seen in which the doctor smeared the child with medicine and beer, and the mother-in-law and father-in-law of the erring woman drank the beer and said: 'All right.' T. (a Christian woman) quoted another case:

> One of my mother's co-wives swore at her mother-in-law. . . . When she bore a child it was very thin and ill, so they sought a doctor, and beat the mother and she continued all she had said in swearing at my grandmother, her mother-in-law. She and the child were treated by the doctor and when her father saw that the child did not recover quickly he brought a cow in payment . . . it is still at my home. From that time the child recovered. If anyone says there is no such thing as the illness of *ingolo* they lie because I have seen it with my own eyes.[1]

When a junior comes to beg pardon of a senior it is the business of the latter's neighbours to persuade him to receive the prodigal. That was indicated in Mwaikambo's account quoted above and reaffirmed by Mwakwelebeja who cited the case of his wife's father, a youngest brother, who had run off with three of his eldest brother's widows allocated to the middle brother, *after* they had been smeared with ash and the heir had slept with them.

When they had performed the death ritual and finished it and the widows had slept with the heir in the house and had taken the *ilibalaga* to their fathers, . . . then three of the widows ran off with the youngest brother. He fled with them to Masoko and to the hills, where he lived a long time and begot children with them. Then later on he brought 'the cow of the ashes (*inombe ya mfumbulo*)' to return to his senior brother. The senior received it and killed it and poured out beer. We ate.

QUESTION: Do people not refuse to receive such a cow, sometimes?

MWAKWELEBEJA: No, they fear to do so, they fear people, because the wrongdoer has come to them and it is they, the neighbours, who tell the senior kinsman: 'He has come, forgive him.' If the senior refuses they will be angry with him. Also we tell him: 'See, that man has strength to beget children with these women, you will eat the cattle.' Then he agrees and says: 'Let us make friends.'

The illness that falls on a widow who rejects the heir after being smeared with the ash is 'like a curse from the ash'. Her lover, 'if he is strong and has medicine he will escape, but if he is not strong he will fall ill . . . because he takes men's life with him [i.e. suffers from their breath].'

[1] A third case, in which the lover was brought to the woman's husband, is quoted in *Good Company*, p. 236.

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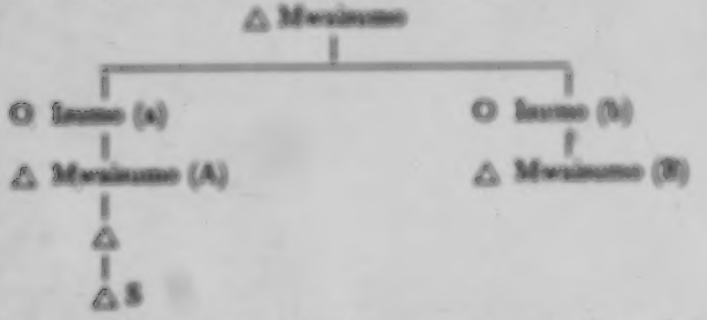
sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part.

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipwe*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ukulanga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwainumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwainumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives.



At a ritual to 'cut the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters.

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk.

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or
beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the
shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the homestead grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his neighbours who must be present and partake of a
•783 feast and bless the young man. 'If father and son just agree with
one another and people do not eat anything, then the sun will not
be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
581 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her
eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at
home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and
infant.

749 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or
village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded
with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines
(*shabo*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased
or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth.
When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother,
kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle.
Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neigh-
bours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and
small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for
making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
595 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also
splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
581 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in
giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers
and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his
sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands.
They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
789 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *akisoni*, cross-cousins.

matters of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow villagers must attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be loved. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abayaga*) for death, puberty and marriage, and birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *ayaga* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *ayaga* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abayaga*' for 'they help the *ayaga*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syongo, wife of Chief Fortekete's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *ayaga*, a doctor, but *ayaga* is the more precise word since *ayaga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of reconciliation, no specialist *ayaga* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakinde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*anyaye*) representing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

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fication both with corpse and shade. In other rituals the identification is with the shade alone, but still the participant is felt to be filthy and close to madness. The symbols of purification are many: cleaning and burning the hut, burning the clothes or leaves worn during the exclusion, elaborate and repeated washing and shaving, and anointing the body with rouge and oil. One aspect of purification is the driving away of the 'filthy' shade symbolized first by throwing away pebbles or a stem of bananas into a running stream; and, secondly, by casting seeds into a pot which is put on the fire, grinding millet in the doorway and letting it fall on bark-cloth, putting various parts of the body on the fire symbolically and grinding them symbolically, passing a winnowing basket of millet between the legs, scattering millet, and dancing the trampling dance. The second group of symbols all represent sexual intercourse. Seed or grain is identified with semen, fire with intercourse, bark-cloth and the round winnowing basket—a woman's basket *par excellence*—represent the woman, and putting seeds on the fire, grinding, passing the basket of millet between the legs, and probably also the trampling dance[1] represent the sex act. The shade is thought to be ejected from the body as semen, and therefore intercourse is a means of driving the shade from the body.

An element of the death ritual is the separation of corpse and spirit, the final disposal of the corpse, and the bringing of the new shade back 'to warm himself with the other shades' at the family hearth: he is received as the water which drips from the doorway of the hut, and welcomed to the hearth with music; but the distinction between the corpse which is got rid of and the shade which is welcomed is not maintained systematically. Repeatedly our informants spoke of the shade (*mzuka*) being driven away from dreams and waking thought, and from men's bodies, as well as being separated from the corpse. The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life. A measure of separation from the shades is a condition of fertility as well as of sanity. Intercourse cannot be fruitful until the shades of her father's lineage have 'moved aside a little' from the nubile girl, the shade of a deceased husband from his widow.

[1] The action of the trampling dance and the contexts in which it occurs at death and puberty suggest this, but such an interpretation was not explicitly given.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F'017 Ngonde F'017
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Isipuki to *Mbaipuka*, the sacred place of the fathers in the banana grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *dipele* medicine, interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstruating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *dipele* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow ones'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *amyoka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the one beneath', *ngwe pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imisoka* (sing. *isoka*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*misoka*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubuyuli*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with physiological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Umyoka*: to rise from the dead. For the sense the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imipoka* rather than *abapoka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *misoka*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

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783 [17] The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it[1] more than their neighbours (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their preoccupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 158 828 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smearing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77–8.

1 [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

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121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[[184] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 ● 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 153, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Nyakyusa thought the emphasis is almost exclusively on the filthy. Awe is expressed in terms of pollution. As we have seen, there is a clear conception of resurrection, of separation between rotting corpse and shade, but still the shades are 'filthy', and the mourner, or the bride, or the mother and newborn child, who is identified with them, is filthy too. There is a conception of purity, innocence, whiteness (*mwelu*), which is applied to those free from witchcraft or other crime, and to virgins, but it is not cited as an attribute of the shades or of the heroes; indeed, it is those who have been *separated* from the shades or Kyala who are pure.

Nyakyusa religion is characterized by two things: the general linking of misfortune with sin—the conception that if someone falls ill physically or mentally it is usually because he or his kinsman has done wrong—and the preoccupation with pollution. These are connected. The chief sins are neglect of ritual and quarrelling between kinsmen. Now neglect of ritual is, in essence, failure to purify oneself—failure to separate from the filthy shade—therefore sin and pollution are linked, though not identified. The connection between pollution and quarrelling between kinsmen is less direct but it exists, for rituals, the means of purification, are also the occasion for composing quarrels, and cleansing oneself of anger by confession—spitting it out—is a condition of their efficacy.

That the Nyakyusa are dogged by the sense of guilt is clear, but whether it is more overwhelming in their society than in others, or merely more openly expressed, is arguable. Why some people look down to earth, to the rotting corpse and bodily excretions which are buried in the earth, and express their awe in terms of pollution, corruption, and others look to the sky and express it in terms of light and purity; why some people seek union with God and others separation from Him, we do not know. The answer to these, as to many questions regarding Nyakyusa religion, lies beyond the field of this investigation.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

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Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
1.	Man. Katanya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Katanya died	'Abapasi'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy disproved this. Found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young man's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (*inongwa*) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Elder brother	Elder brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had asked

Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
6.	Son	Millet crop cultivated by son failed	Father	Had moved from father's homestead. Left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7.	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Stinted one wife of fish	Divination	Prayed in banana grove. Wife confessed her anger
8.	Kasitile	Kasitile fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in his hut for shades	Divination	—
9.	Married woman (wife of Mwakobeia)	Woman delirious		Her newly-married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hen or anything, and drank from mother's calabash cup	Divination	—
10.	Child	Death of child	Father's sister?	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. 'The ritual entered the stomach of the child'	Neglected death ritual performed

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MPOMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they were ill I carried them to my house.'[1] 754 578

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A WOMAN: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both left?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mbikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning." '

MWAMBUJULE: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows." '

KANYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOMA: 'See, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyona who is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyona is angry because he has taken cattle." ' 787

THE MBUNGUS (Mwakyona's sisters): 'We like him (the shade), let him come.' 753

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*akabini*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads. 782

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [783]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*lolwiho*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

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782 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[783] stopped speaking Kanyamale was ill. Then her husband charged her
754 with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill since we came from confessing anger.' Then Kanyamale grew sulky and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place. Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking? You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said: 'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?' Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[627] He took the case to Mwakisisya, the village headman, and lost it. Then the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakionde went to attend to the medicine
754 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medicines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakionde, because he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior, followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all over their bodies.

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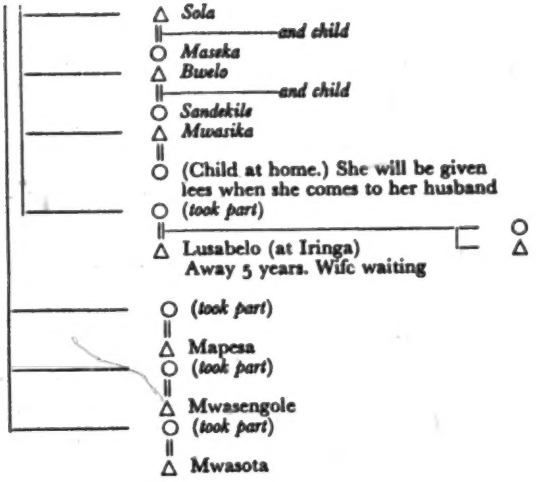

Key: △ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.
Name in capitals = Widow inherited. Names in italics = participated in ritual. † = Christian.

Participants:

Men of lineage	11	Father + his full brother + 4/6 his half-brothers + widow's 2 full brothers + 2/3 half-brothers; son of half-brother.
Daughters of lineage	18	6/8 half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away), 8/10 father's half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away did not), 4 unmarried daughters of half-brother.
Wives	32	Mother, 2 co-wives of mother, 2 wives of father's brother, 15 wives of father's half-brothers (including chief) (1 sick, drank at home), 3 Christian did not come, 4 wives of own full brothers, 3 wives of half-brothers, 1 widow of grandfather, 4 wives of father's half-brother's sons.
Children		of brothers, of father's brothers, and half-brothers.

N.B. Sons-in-law do not participate.

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(7) ○ Nsole (inherited by Mwasalemba)

○ Malija† (Did not come, no medicine sent)
‖
△ Ulinyelusi†

○
‖
△ Filipo† (Gone to Dar-es-Salaam)

△ *Johani*
‖
(1) ○ *Ngota*
‖——*children*
(2) ○ *Sambwele*

○ (*took part*)
‖——Kilongo
△ Undekile

○ (*took part:* came without children)
‖
△ Mpekele

○ (*took part*)
‖
△ Mwasota

▲
●
△ *Sola*
‖——*and child*
○ *Maseka*
△ *Buvelo*
‖——*and child*
○ *Sandekile*
△ *Mwasika*
‖
○ (Child at home.) She will be given lees when she comes to her husband
○ (*took part*)
‖——————○
△ Lusabelo (at Iringa) △
Away 5 years. Wife waiting

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[FACING P.274 (B)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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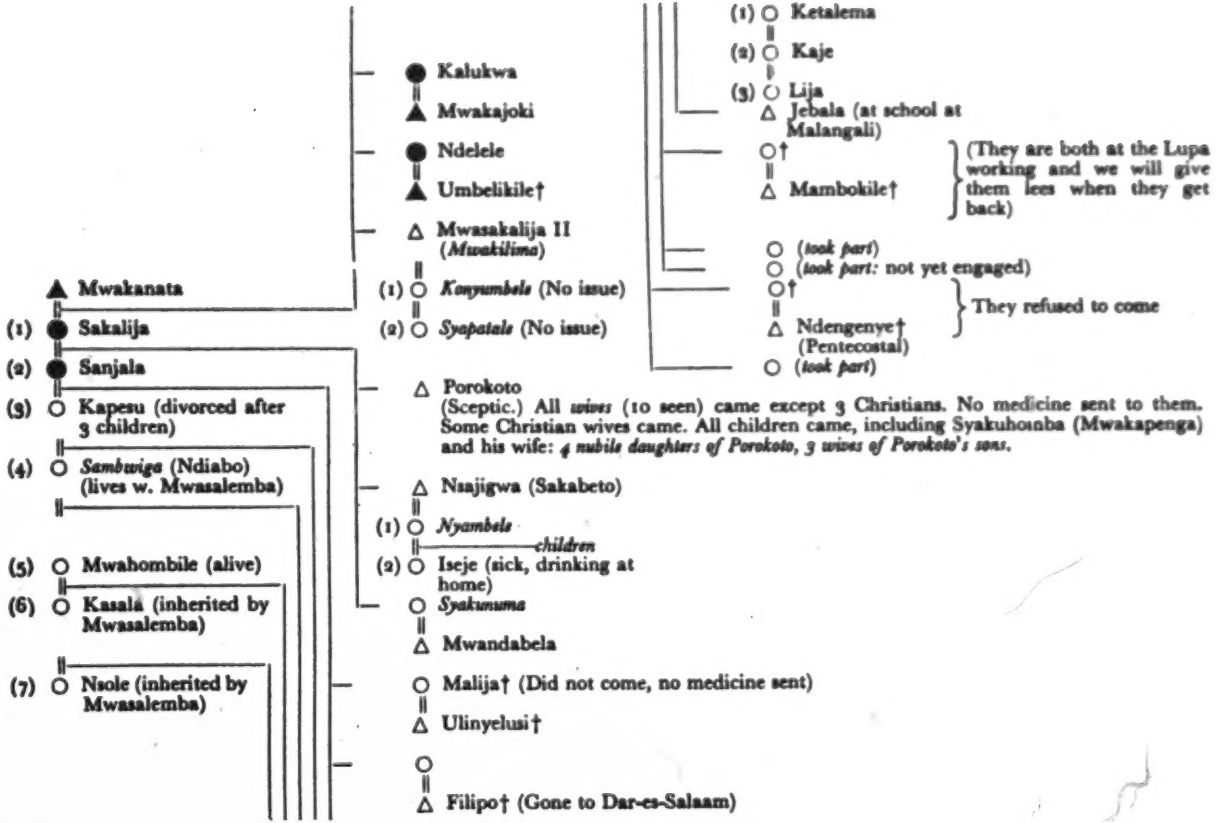
Kalukwa
Mwakajoki
Ndelele
Umbelikile†
Mwasakalija II (*Mwakilima*)
(1) *Kanyumbelo* (No issue)
(2) *Syapatalo* (No issue)
Mwakanata
(1) Sakalija
(2) Sanjala
(3) Kapesu (divorced after 3 children)
(4) *Sambwiga* (Ndiabo) (lives w. Mwasalemba)
(5) Mwahombile (alive)
(6) Kasala (inherited by Mwasalemba)
(7) Nsole (inherited by Mwasalemba)
(1) Ketalema
(2) Kaje
(3) Lija
Jebala (at school at Malangali)
Mambokile† (They are both at the Lupa working and we will give them fees when they get back)
(*took part*)
(*took part:* not yet engaged)
Ndengenye† (Pentecostal) They refused to come
(*took part*)
Porokoto
(Sceptic.) All *wives* (10 seen) came except 3 Christians. No medicine sent to them. Some Christian wives came. All children came, including Syakuhoinba (Mwakapenga) and his wife: *4 nubile daughters of Porokoto, 3 wives of Porokoto's sons.*
Nsajigwa (Sakabeto)
(1) *Nyambele*
children
(2) Iseje (sick, drinking at home)
Syakunuma
Mwandabela
Malija† (Did not come, no medicine sent)
Ulinyelusi†
Filipo† (Gone to Dar-es-Salaam)

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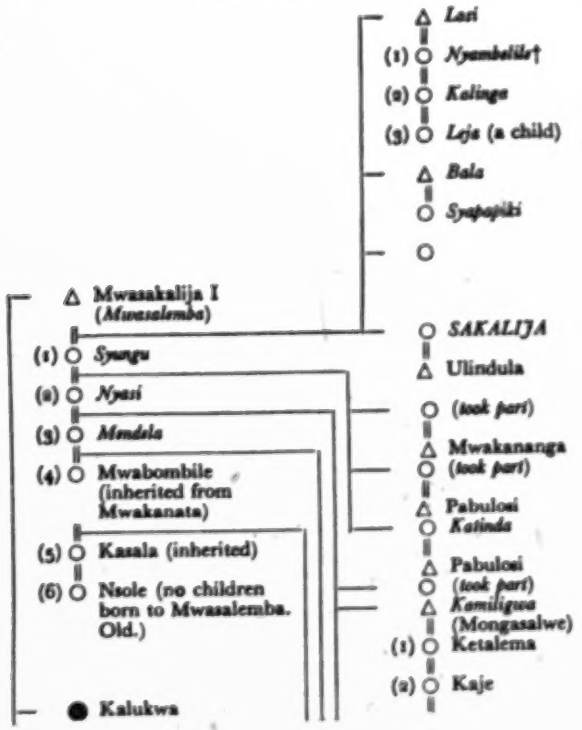
TABLE (c) (*See pp.* 43, 192).

GENEALOGY OF MWASALEMBA (RITUAL OF THE GASPING COUGH)



[facing p. 274(D)]

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air, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana groves: and always in a sitting, not a lying position. 844

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men: 845 782

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession; 845 783

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845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is 783 universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family 846 place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 But in about a week she goes to show the child to her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which 603 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both 431

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846 earlier days. The family of Lugulu at Mwakeleli wear blinders of leaves for weeks after a birth. At the end of the period a feast of beer and ill-cooked food is prepared, and both sets of families spend the night in open reviling of each other, and ceaseless tramping of the feet the livelong night. In the morning good food is eaten, and both parties go their ways with mutual good will. This is called *ukutila indila*, to fear the fears; to endure the terrors. No explanation of what the terrors are has reached me.

845 The birth of twins is regarded as one of the greatest
783 of misfortunes, and is followed by ceremonies intended to cleanse the parents from the stain which has come upon them, and to prevent its spread to others. A hut is built outside the village, with a partition in the middle, on either side of which the parents live, but they must speak to each other only in whispers, and to others not at all. The doctor sprinkles all the relatives with medicine, and kindles a fire, in the smoke of which every one must stand for a moment. The parents are shut up in the hut, but may leave it for a few moments at night, and no one may see them. After about a month the doctor comes again, with beating drums and shaking rattle, and brings the parents out of their house of restraint. A second sprinkling of medicine upon each relative being made, the doctor takes a bunch of grass from the roof, kindles it, and hands it to the father, who, holding it in one hand, crawls out of the house, and runs, followed by the crowd. He returns, however, and receives their

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salutations with his hand upon his mouth. Beer mixed with medicine is handed to him, and, all the others drinking one by one from a calabash, he takes a little into his mouth and squirts it upon each as he or she drinks. The final stage comes about a month later, when, in the presence of the doctor, without whom nothing can be done, all the grandparents and both parents drink beer amid a circle of shouting villagers, and then, laying hold of the calabash, break it in pieces. After one more sprinkling of all, the doctor departs, taking with him a cow as fee for his many exertions. But until another child is born, the parents must eat alone, or with other parents of twins; and the mother may not pass behind anyone without warning them and receiving their consent, signified by clapping the hands.

The naming of the child. The Konde child possesses a varied selection of names. When he is grown he will offer a European employer one or another, sometimes in perfect honesty, sometimes with intent to hide the fact that under a previously given name he had a bad character. But the names are all genuine. Descent is through the father, and the new-born child takes the personal name of its paternal grandfather, let us say Ambangire. But his mother must never refer to her father-in-law by name, nor may she use the name in referring to any other person who bears it; her son therefore takes her own name; if she is called Kalukwa, he will be named Mwakalukwa; next he takes the family name of his father, say Mwakasungula.

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residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

Murder.—Murder is, from the native point of view, a much less serious crime than cattle stealing. But it should be remembered that British law calls crimes murder which are not so called by the Konde. A man who kills his wife's paramour has not committed murder: he has exacted a just revenge, and no more. In a case of real murder, the murderer or his friends usually pay a fine, or rather a compensation, of up to ten head of cattle; and the loss to the family of the murdered man is further made good by the other family handing over a daughter. This girl must never be spoken of as a substitute, for that would cause her children, when she has them, to die. It is needless to add that under British law compensation of any kind to the family of the murdered person does not acquit the murderer. What follows, therefore, is purely native law, which, if administered at all, is administered only when there is reason to believe that the police will never come to hear of it.

When a murder was committed, the chief directed the friends of the murderer to bring him for trial, but if they chose to put him to death themselves, the case was ended. Should it be impossible to discover the murderer, a friend of his, it hardly mattered who, was put to death, and a wide-extending vendetta might be the result. When the law is satisfied, a formal reconciliation between the two families takes place. Under the guidance of the medicine man, who is

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627 783 master of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep, provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcase into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcase of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

682 673 The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious matter, for it is really a double murder, and the chief has to be compensated for the loss of dependents. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and loss to the community results.

682 672 For accidental death there are numerous regulations. If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

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it?" even although he avoids the name. If a woman about to go for water or firewood hears anyone use the word for lion, she will not go. An elephant in the garden is referred to, very strangely, as *ikisu*, the world; a crocodile is *ikya mmisi*, the thing in the water; and a snake is referred to as "the thing from the grass." The name of a dead person is not used by relatives.

Again, it is *mwiko* to see certain persons. Chungu, in the past, must not be seen by young people, though I have been unable to learn that anything very dreadful happened to them if they did. On the other hand, children are still kept away from great doctors, whose glance has power to kill them; nor may anyone watch a doctor making up his medicines.

Growing crops and food being cooked must not be approached by unclean persons, for the uncleanness would pass over and affect the food or the crops; as it would affect other persons if they came near the unclean. Uncleanness is transmissible, and the full ceremonial of the original uncleanness must be gone through by the one to whom it has been transmitted, lest it should desecrate the whole community with its living *tabu*.

Prohibited places are numerous, chief among them being graves, which are *mwiko* to all except the families to which they belong. It is forbidden to work when a dead person is being mourned for, but I cannot learn that a breach of this rule would imply anything except disrespect to the dead.

If we try to classify the prohibitions we shall find

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crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The curse has taken effect. 593

After a time good-natured people try to bring father and son together again. The son is persuaded to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,[1] express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment. 578 593 783

It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind, 000

[1] [Fighting and throwing down one's father —Analyst]

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763 *mortem* takes place, though in the neighbourhood of Missions and Magistracies the practice is beginning to die out. Only the operators are present, and when it is over the others approach again. The brothers or 764 near relatives of the dead man go down into the grave and receive the body from other relatives who hand it to them. It is not placed in the bottom of the grave, but in a cavity dug into the side, the entrance to which is closed with a bamboo door, before the soil is filled in. The body faces towards the original home of the dead. If the dead man possessed cattle, a curious ceremony now takes place. A cow is brought, and made to look into the grave where her late owner lies, her head being forcibly bent if necessary. The cow is now the property of the spirits, and must never be given away or sold out of the family. Little children of the dead man are handed across the grave, and older children leap over it, and then pull themselves, in a sitting position, over the soil which is presently to be filled in. If this ceremony is properly performed, the dead parent will not disturb the children by nightmares. Its omission is an insult to the dead; but the practice is being abandoned by the more progressive sections of the community. It is at this point that the parting address, given in the chapter on "The Spirits," is spoken. When the soil is filled in, a cutting of *indola* tree is placed at head and foot, to mark the grave.

764 All who took any part in the burying must now wash in running water, which carries off the pollu- ●783 tion; and carries off also the danger of the disease

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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which killed the man passing over to those present at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

718 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
769 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[534] [1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikole*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *nkuju* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

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to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 782 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us wash and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [784] [783]

[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

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782 796 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both have our children anointed now.'

● [783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the [643] [793] [177] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him. The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said [784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

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chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

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CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujola ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujola ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [178] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [775] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujola ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbo*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

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the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat hens, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

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the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu, the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

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commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying:

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kiposa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(*b*) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened:

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nsyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

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of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (30 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

POROKOTO: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
MWAMUNDA: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*tujebelu*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

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MWAFULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIMWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILONGO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (=knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWASALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [754] [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [177]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [753]

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783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]
[753] MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?
MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

[778] Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

[755] Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.
Q.: Why must the women come?
M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .'
The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

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away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo shula tulinaguw bwila munda, mundeke jo jujo, nalenga mfwile ndinaguw—umfu ugu gutijenga nakamo jo jujo—papo lenga ndemile nitati 'unyuka akalele umfu ugu' bo fintile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again.

This interpretation by Mwasalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwasalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Lunpolo Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 5-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 500-01; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 32-33.

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and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mhamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

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Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat raw. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it raw: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it openly!" ' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(d) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Fibombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 90-4.

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796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
● 783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come, may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach? Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your [754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with [769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home, [372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one [755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lasiya fye*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

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(d) THE WILD PIG

Another sort of cleansing, unorganized, but concerning groups of neighbours, not kinsmen, is the 'blessing one another' (*ukuse-jesa*) which takes place if a pig-hunt fails and quarrelling between the hunters is suspected to be the cause. It was described by a Christian, who had called his pagan neighbours to help him in tracking down a pig, which he had wounded during the previous night in his maize garden. It eluded them, hour after hour, though they were close upon it.

The neighbours began to think that the pig was sent by the shades (*sili nemindu*)—they meant themselves. So they stopped hunting and gathered together to express their anger, and they said: 'Our fathers built together and drank beer together, why should this pig trouble us so? We don't suspect our friend who is a Christian for he has shown that he has no quarrel with us. Had he been angry he would not have called us to hunt with him. But if one of the rest of us has a quarrel with his fellow let him speak out, that we may all be free of anger (*teje bela*) and seize the pig, for if we think hard thoughts about one another we shall not have strength to take the pig.' All said that they were in friendship with their fellows, so first one and then another took his spear and . . . laid it on the ground and said: 'I am without anger (*Une ndimmela itela*).' All of them did this. One spoke to his fellow and said: 'Perhaps you are angry over that quarrel we had over beer?' But he replied, 'No.' Then the first man took up his spear from the ground and said, 'Father help us to catch this pig, if there was a quarrel, forgive, do not think of that with which I caused you to be angry. We bless one another, we are without anger.' Then all the others did the same, and they set off again to hunt.

This account, and the commentary of Mwaikambo on it, made it plain that the true translation of *bela* in such a context is 'without anger'. The communal rituals in which a whole chiefdom, or a group of neighbours, participate all have this one end, the cleansing of the group of quarrels by their open expression and explicit rejection.

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793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NEESA
[791] A SANOU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

793 755 It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grandfather (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed [787] to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his [778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . . [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with [753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

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some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umwali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong." ' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/4/37

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2*s*. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

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always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonoka (29), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is innocent (*mwelu*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2] May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] Three Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sangu diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete).

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

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Record of G.W. 10/4/37

783 782 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile's: Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kissogota, Ngulyo, and Njobakosa the commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too weak to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitile. Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening?' I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thought it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipopo replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did you think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and he laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close by. Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of his mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they discussed the case (*ukujoba inongwa*) or spoke out (*ukusosya*) or prayed (*ukwiputa*). This half formal prayer (*ukwiputa*) over beer is an essential part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree by [688] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is startled [769] that Mwamaloba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki says, 'Who is there?' [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the shades about it]. They (*sic*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch him (*sic*) back.'

Then Kastile told them about his prayer and how he had admitted his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanjoki (60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamaloba (86), I am a woman.' 'If you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwaitende's (61) come.' 'Yes,' Kissogota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you are a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are at fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakisambwe (Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank you Mwakagile (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather, 59), for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.)

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem of bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 115) is cut, it goes (to the shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*vide* pp. 84-5, 121), we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old *umwali* tree: 'But friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away long ago. Did this *umwali* tree fall when Kasitile (60, father of the present one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, where has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kasitile, 'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo seek a sheep." They attended to it again. And when I came from the plain, I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

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All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?' There was a continuous effort to extract reasons. [783] [782]

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed. [778]

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umwali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Nsyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!' [769]

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'. [834]

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant. [689]

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta. [684]

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

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783 782 [684] Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife [835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

[686] They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyabandu*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we [754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

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to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (30).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (82) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (*mboto*), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (30); he stirred up himself.'

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (82), and to Mwakabule (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile softened it by addressing Njobakosa and his fellows: 'But Njobakosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kissogota got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobakosa, Ngulyo, and Kissogota, one to Mwamakunda and Ndisu (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kissogota and Njobakosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

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783 782 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

754 KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak [775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kissogota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobakosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kissogota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kissogota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Maloba' (86, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umwelu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kissogota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*batitu*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[648] QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*imindu*) on the mouth?[1] What about [775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

[753] KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

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754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!
753 QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?
KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
[793] they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?
KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?
688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Imipyago indosi mitalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

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among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a nemesis attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others. Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no *ubulosi* is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 198-261.

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out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupelesya*) and *also* a symbol of emission and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 139). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ngolofu*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I doubted this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v, 56 (1954), pp. 237-8.

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769 782 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is *ukuhoboka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his [684] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many [783] smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain [764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming out'.

769 783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6.
[2] *Good Company*, pp. 107, 240.
[3] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185.
[4] *ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

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assuaged and men should be *mwelu*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very *opposite* of spiritual power (*amanga* or *ubusisya*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 138) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mwelu*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*nsito*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mwelu* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tuli belu*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought.

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutungulu* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *ntungulu*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong.

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is *also* the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement

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swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

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directed towards heroes who are also forefathers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kasitile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide supra*, pp. 128-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

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during worshipping hours, but shall reserve same until evening when worshipping is over.

Any member found contravening these rules shall be dealt with by the Session and if found guilty shall be suspended or expelled from the Church.

The term of Chairman for the Annual Conference shall be two years, but he shall be elected again if required.

The Annual General Conference shall be composed of a body of men chosen from each division, viz. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and other notable men.

A general confession with words and music composed by one of the Pastors of the African National Church, Robert Sambo, is used as an alternative to the Ten Commandments. Nyasuru translated it for us from the original Tumbuka.

Jehovah God we have come before Thee to worship and to confess our sins which we have done during the week.

Response: May they all go away (*fyosa fibukege*).[1]

We have sinned before Thee in speaking to people, we have offended Thy creatures, we have spoken bad words, we have grieved their hearts, Father.

May they all go away.

We have sinned against Thee in thoughts coveting the wives and husbands of others; we have broken the Ten Commandments, Father. We have done wrong in our village, Father. Witchcraft, adultery, and hatred, all these are in our village. We pray forgive all, Father.

May they all go away.

Our chiefs do not love one another in their hearts. Take such hearts from them and give them one heart.

May they all go away.

A new commandment you have given unto us all to love one another as in Heaven, where there is no quarrelling. Teach us all to keep Thy Word, Father.

May they all go away.

That our chiefs may be one in loving and ruling their country and their people, and lead us all well. This we pray, father, grant us.

May they all go away.

The old worship is broken down; we have come as wild animals which are without God. Call us again to worship, Father.

May they all go away.

Africa is the land of our forefathers. We have damaged her with our new ways, by leaving all the ways of our forefathers, ways which gave peace to the country, Father.

[1] The phrase used in the pagan ritual for cleansing the country, cf. p. 105.

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chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority.

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries.

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*akasoya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*akasoya*)',

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must confess if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

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and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of opposite tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the graves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chiefdomship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. iv, 1931, p. 19.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 111–4.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 130–200, 223.